DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 213 671 SP 019 695

AUTHOR Page, Jane A.; Page, Fred M., Jr.
TITLE Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers' Perceptions of the Teaching Profession.
SPONS AGENCY Georgia Southern Coll., Statesboro.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 20p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Choice; *Career Planning; *Education Majors; Racial Differences; Sex Differences; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Recruitment; Teacher Salaries; Teacher Supply and Demand; *Teaching (Occupation)
IDENTIFIERS *United States (Southeast)

ABSTRACT

A survey of preservice and inservice teachers in ten southeastern states was conducted to identify perceptions of teaching as a career opportunity. Differences in perceptions were calculated on the basis of sex, race, and grade level certification. Discriminating factors associated with preservice and inservice teachers were categorized on the basis of whether or not they would encourage others to enter the teaching profession. Major findings of the study include: (1) Salaries, discipline problems, and working conditions were perceived as discouraging factors; (2) Encouraging factors included contribution to humanity, job security, and fringe benefits; (3) A majority of inservice teachers would encourage a capable student to enter teaching; (4) Some aspects of teaching were seen more positively by females than by males; (5) Differences existed between perceptions of preservice teachers categorized according to race and grade level certification; (6) Differences existed between perceptions of inservice teachers categorized by race and sex; and (7) In considering whether or not they would encourage others to enter teaching, preservice teachers' responses reflected their perceptions of salary, discipline problems, job security, area of certification, and the age at which they became interested in teaching. Tabulated results of the survey are included. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED213671

PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

by

Dr. Jane A. Page
Assistant Professor
Elementary Education with Special Education

and

Dr. Fred M. Page, Jr.
Assistant to the Dean
School of Education

A Research Project
Funded by the Faculty Research Committee
Georgia Southern College
Spring, 1981

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Fred M. Page, Jr.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

SP 019 695

PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The problem of the study was three-fold: (1) to identify pre-service and in-service teacher perceptions of the teaching profession as a career opportunity; (2) to determine differences in perceptions of groups of pre-service and in-service teachers categorized on the basis of sex, race, and grade level certification; and (3) to determine discriminating factors associated with groups of pre-service and in-service teachers categorized on the basis of whether or not they would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.

Teacher availability deficits are becoming a national concern. Based on a National Education Association study, 37 states reported teacher shortages, either within geographical confines or within curriculum limitations, for the 1980-1981 academic year. Some areas of the Southeast are experiencing intense teacher availability deficits. For example, the shortage of teachers in Georgia is of such a critical nature that a state recruiter has been employed to reduce the number of teacher vacancies.

Current conditions do not provide encouraging factors for the future. The addition of new programs, coupled with an increase in school-age population beginning in 1985, demonstrate the anticipated need for an increased number of teachers. Additionally, this anticipated need is signficantly increased with the consideration of the exodus of teachers from the profession and the decline of teacher education enrollments.

Teacher educators, facing this dilemma, have speculated contributing factors. To determine which of these factors are indeed contributing to teacher shortages, pre-service teachers and in-service teachers were surveyed to identify their perceptions of the teaching profession as a career opportunity.

Ten southeastern states provided the population source for this study. A letter of inquiry was mailed to superintendents and deans in these states to determine their willingness to allow individuals within their jurisdiction to participate in the study. Following receipt of appropriate approval, questionnaires were mailed to designated data collectors in the institutions for distribution, collection and return to the researchers. There were 387 pre-service teachers and 315 in-service teachers that responded to controlled-choice item instruments developed for each group by the researchers.

Frequency distributions were calculated in the identification of the perceptions of the groups. Analyses of variance were utilized to determine differences between groups categorized on the basis of sex, race and grade level certification. Discriminant analyses were computed to determine discriminating factors between groups of pre-service and in-service teachers categorized on the basis of whether or not they would encourage others to enter the teaching profession.

Results

Specific findings for the study are identified on pages 5 through 16. Some of the major findings of the study include:

1. Ninety-six percent of the total respondents perceived the teacher's salary as a major discouraging factor. Discipline problems and working conditions were also perceived as discouraging.

2. Encouraging factors related to teaching as identified by respondents include: contribution to humanity, job security, and fringe benefits. Most of the subjects viewed teaching as a "good profession to enter," especially for women.

3. Seventy-one percent of the in-service teachers stated that they would encourage a capable student to enter teaching. However, only 49 per-

cent indicated that they would encourage an interested daughter and only 28 percent stated that they would encourage an interested son.

4. Analyses of variance and Scheffe tests identified five items that revealed significant differences at the .05 level between perceptions of male and female pre-service teachers. These aspects of teaching were perceived more positively by females than by males.

5. There were eight items that indicated significant differences between perceptions of groups of pre-service teachers categorized according to race.

6. There were eleven items that indicated significant differences between perceptions of groups of pre-service teachers categorized according to grade level certification.

7. Analyses of variance and Scheffe tests identified five items that revealed significant differences at the .05 level between perceptions of male and female in-service teachers.

8. There were seven items that indicated significant differences between perceptions of groups of in-service teachers categorized according to race.

9. Teaching's "contribution to humanity" was the only item that revealed a significant difference between groups of in-service teachers categorized according to grade level certification. Teachers with secondary and early childhood certification revealed this aspect as more encouraging than teachers with middle grades certification.

10. On the instrument administered to pre-service teachers, 25 of the factors combined to predict with an 84.02 percent accuracy whether or not these students would encourage others to enter teaching. Highly discriminating factors include their perceptions of salary, discipline problems, job security, their area of certification, and the age at which they became interested in teaching.

11. On the instrument administered to in-service teachers, 19 items combined to predict with an 84.16 percent accuracy whether or not teachers would encourage students to consider teaching. The most discriminating factor was whether or not the teachers themselves would choose teaching again if they had the opportunity. Other discriminating items related to teachers' attitudes concerning social status, job security, fringe benefits, contribution to humanity, and job availability.

Significance of Findings

The results of this study will be beneficial to teacher educators and government officials in their attempts to ameliorate problems which contribute to teacher shortages. One of the major problems is related to economics. Government officials in states with teacher shortages need to become aware that low salaries are indeed contributing to their teacher deficit and adopt appropriate measures.

The results of this study will also be beneficial in generating an awareness among teacher educators and school personnel of the need for intense recruiting. Recruitment by educators should include efforts at grade levels much earlier than the senior year in high school and should continue on college campuses among undecided majors. The availability of positions for teachers should be published and clarified since many respondents in areas of shortages perceived job availability as a discouraging factor. Also, factors that were perceived as encouraging, such as the teaching profession's contribution to humanity and job security, need to be emphasized.

The continued positive contributions of the teaching profession to our society are contingent upon the availability of an adequate supply of teachers. Equipped with supporting data, such as information from this study, educators can initiate activities that will be beneficial in increasing the availability of teachers.

IN-SERVICE
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

n = 315

VARIABLE	PERCENTAGE
1. Sex	
Female	78
Male	22
2. Race	
Black	14
White	85
Other	1
3. Certification	
Elementary	30
Secondary	56
K-12	14
4. Degree	
B.S.	40
M.Ed.	50
Ed.S.	10
5. Future Plans:	
Teach until retirement	56
Teach then change professions	14
Teach then become a homemaker	14
Teach then move to another field of Education	16
6. How long have you been a teacher?	
1 - 3 years	13
4 - 7 years	24
8 -11 years	25
12 -15 years	16
More than 15 years	22

IN-SERVICE
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION
PERCEPTIONS

VARIABLE		PERCENTAGE
Would you choose teaching again if you had the opportunity to reconsider?	Yes	68
	No	32
Would these individuals encourage:		
Parents	Yes	66
	No	34
College Teachers	Yes	75
	No	25
High School Principals	Yes	59
	No	41
Teachers	Yes	82
	No	18
Counselors	Yes	74
	No	26
Friends	Yes	51
	No	49
Do Teachers enjoy their work?		
Yes-Most of the time		59
Some of the time or very little		41
Would these factors encourage students to consider teaching:		
Salary	Yes	16
	No	84
Fringe Benefits	Yes	73
	No	27
Working Conditions	Yes	49
	No	51
Contribution to Humanity	Yes	85
	No	15
Social Status	Yes	44
	No	56
Job Security	Yes	72
	No	28
Job Availability	Yes	53
	No	47
Teaching is a good profession:		
For women to enter	Yes	88
	No	12
For men to enter	Yes	48
	No	52

VARIABLE		PERCENTAGE
Would you encourage a capable student?		Yes 71 No 29
Would you encourage an interested daughter?		Yes 49 No 51
Would you encourage an interested son?		Yes 28 No 72
Would the following factors discourage?		
	Salary	Yes 97 No 3
	Working Conditions	Yes 79 No 21
	Disciplinary Problems	Yes 95 No 5
	Social Status	Yes 50 No 50
	Job Availability	Yes 61 No 39
	Job Security	Yes 45 No 55
	Fringe Benefits	Yes 40 No 60
Are any of your relatives educators?		Yes 80 No 20

RESULTS OF SCHEFFE TESTS
FOR ITEMS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES
IN RESPONSES OF MALE (M) AND FEMALE (F) IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

VARIABLE	DIFFERENCE*	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Plans to Continue Teaching	F > M	.02
Would Choose Teaching Again	F > M	.02
Teachers Enjoy Work	F > M	.01
Good Profession for Men	M > F	.01
Respondents Would Encourage an Interested Son	M > F	.01

*Symbol on the left side of the greater than symbol (>) represents the group that responded more positively.

RESULTS OF SCHEFFE TESTS
FOR ITEMS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN RESPONSES OF GROUPS OF IN-SERVICE TEACHERS
CATEGORIZED ON THE BASIS OF RACE

VARIABLE	DIFFERENCES*	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Years Taught	O, B > W	.03
High School Principal Encourages	B > W, O	.00
School Counselor Encourages	B > W	.02
Salary	B > W	.00
Working Conditions	B > W	.00
Contribution to Humanity	B > O	.02
Good Profession for Men	O, B > W	.00

*B = Black
W = White
O = Other
Symbols on the left side of the greater than symbol (>) represent the groups that responded positively.

RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE TESTS
FOR ITEMS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN GROUPS OF IN-SERVICE TEACHERS
CATEGORIZED ON THE BASIS OF GRADE LEVEL CERTIFICATION
(K-4, 4-8, 7-12 or K-12)

VARIABLE	DIFFERENCES*	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Contribution to Humanity	7-12, K-4 > 4-8	.04

*Grade level representations on the left side of the greater than symbol (>) represent groups that responded more positively.

IN-SERVICE
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

Nineteen items on the instrument combined to predict with an 84.16% accuracy whether or not teachers will encourage capable students to enter teaching.

The most discrminating factor was whether or not they themselves would choose teaching again if they had the opportunity.

Other discrminating items related to teachers' attitudes concerning social status, job security, fringe benefits, contribution to humanity, and job availability.

Salary was the least discriminating factor of the 19 that worked in combination for prediction.

PRE-SERVICE
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

n = 387

VARIABLE	PERCENTAGE
1. Sex	
Female	86
Male	14
2. Race	
Black	11
White	88
Other	1
3. Certification	
Elementary	59
Secondary	18
K-12	23
4. Prior to entering college did anyone talk to you about becoming a teacher?	
Yes	55
No	45
5. Age you became interested in teaching:	
prior to age 12	18
age 13-14	10
age 15-16	17
age 17-18	21
above age 18	34
6. Plans after graduation:	
a. teach	48
b. enter graduate school	14
c. teach and work on graduate degree	23
d. seek other employment	6
e. other	9

PRE-SERVICE
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS
PERCEPTIONS

VARIABLE		PERCENTAGE
Do the individuals listed below encourage your interest in teaching:		
Parents	Yes	81
	No	19
College Teachers	Yes	79
	No	21
Former High School Principals	Yes	31
	No	69
Former High School Teachers	Yes	55
	No	45
Former High School Counselors	Yes	33
	No	67
Friends	Yes	66
	No	34
Do you think teachers enjoy their work?		
Most of the time		71
Some or little		29
Do you think the following aspects ENCOURAGE students to consider teaching?		
Salary	Yes	14
	No	86
Fringe Benefits	Yes	76
	No	24
Working Conditions	Yes	72
	No	28
Contribution to Humanity	Yes	90
	No	10
Social Status	Yes	54
	No	46
Job Security	Yes	67
	No	33
Job Availability	Yes	45
	No	55
Do you think the following aspects discourage?		
Salary	Yes	95
	No	5
Working Conditions	Yes	66
	No	34
Disciplinary Problems	Yes	49
	No	51
Social Status	Yes	48
	No	52

VARIABLE		PERCENTAGE
Do you think the following aspects discourage (Continued)		
Job Availability	Yes	73
	No	27
Job Security	Yes	54
	No	46
Fringe Benefits	Yes	31
	No	69
Do you consider teaching a good profession:		
for women to enter	Yes	98
	No	2
for men to enter	Yes	40
	No	60
Would you encourage a capable student to consider teaching?	Yes	89
	No	11
Would you encourage an interested brother?	Yes	54
	No	46
Would you encourage an interested sister?	Yes	70
	No	30
Are any of your relatives educators?	Yes	66
	No	34

RESULTS OF SCHEFFE TESTS
FOR ITEMS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES
IN RESPONSES OF MALE (M) AND FEMALE (F) PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

VARIABLE	DIFFERENCE*	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Fringe Benefits	F > M	.01
Working Conditions	F > M	.01
Discipline	F > M	.00
Good Profession for Women	F > M	.00
Respondents Would Encourage a Capable Student to Consider Teaching	F > M	.00

*Symbol on the left side of the greater than symbol (>) represents the group that responded more positively.

RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE TESTS
FOR ITEMS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN RESPONSES OF GROUPS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS
CATEGORIZED ON THE BASIS OF RACE

VARIABLE	DIFFERENCES*	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
College Teachers Would Encouage	W > B	.01
Salary	O, B > W	.00
Social Status	B > W, O	.00
Contribution to Humanity	O, W > B	.02
Fringe Benefits	W > B, O	.02
Good Profession for Men	B > O	.03
Respondents Would Encourage a Capable Student to Consider Teaching	B, W > O	.03
Respondents Would Encourage an Interested Brother to Consider Teaching	B > O	.05

*B = Black
W = White
O = Other
Symbols on the left side of the greater than symbol (>) the groups that responded more positively.

RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE TESTS
FOR ITEMS SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN GROUPS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS
CATEGORIZED ON THE BASIS OF GRADE LEVEL CERTIFICATION
(K-4, 4-8, 7-12 or K-12)

VARIABLE	DIFFERENCES*	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Did anyone talk to you about teaching prior to entering college?	4-8, K-12 > K-4, 7-12	.03
Parents Encourage	4-8 > 7-12, K-12	.04
College Teachers Encourage	4-8, K-4 > K-12	.03
High School Principal Encourage	4-8 > K-12	.05
Salary	K-4, 4-8 > 7-12, K-12	.01
Social Status	K-4 > 7-12	.01
Job Security	7-12 > K-12	.05
Good Profession for Women	4-8 > 7-12	.00
Respondents Would Encourage a Capable Student to Consider Teaching	K-4 > 7-12	.00
Respondents Would Encourage an Intersted Sister to Consider Teaching	4-8, K-4 > 7-12, K-12	.00
Are Any Relatives Educators?	4-8 > K-12, 7-12	.01

*Grade level representations on the left side of the greater than symbol (>) represent groups that responded more positively.

PRE-SERVICE
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

Twenty-five factors combine to preduct with an 84% accuracy whether or not these students would encourage others to enter teaching.

Some highly discriminating factors include whether or not they felt:

1. teaching was a good profession for women;
2. friends would encourage;
3. salary would discourage;
4. discipline problems would discourage;
5. job security would discourage.

Also, their area of certification and the age at which they became interested in teaching were discriminating factors.